DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 167 223 JC 790 171

AUTHOR Gausman, Chester H.
TITLE Curriculum Comprehensiveness in the Small/Rural Community College: Strategies for Getting More Out of Limited Resources.
PUB DATE Aug 78
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on Small/Rural Colleges (1st, Blacksburg, Virginia, August, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Community Colleges; *Delivery Systems; Educational Alternatives; *Flexible Scheduling; *Individualized Instruction; *Junior Colleges; Program Improvement; *Rural Education; Rural Extension; Rural Population; Rural Schools; School Calendars; Small Colleges; Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS *Open Entry Open Exit

ABSTRACT

Individualized, self-paced instruction and an open-entry-open-exit calendar have several advantages which help to overcome the restraints that may modify equal educational opportunity at small, rural colleges. These restraints include limited resources of students, distance from campus, effects of agriculturally-related occupations on student time, and sparsity of area population. The advantages of individualized instruction are that: (1) it increases enrollment by coinciding the entry and exit from college with the harvest seasons; (2) it increases enrollment of the temporarily unemployed; (3) it increases enrollment by providing more flexible scheduling to fit part-time employment as well as full-time employment; (4) it reduces costs by increasing the productivity of instructors; (5) it increases the portability of courses to distant centers by permitting the use of part-time instructors; and (6) it provides a more effective means of packaging programs for industry, that is, as short-term instructional units offered on the campuses. (MB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED167223

CURRICULUM COMPREHENSIVENESS IN THE SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING MORE OUT OF LIMITED RESOURCES

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Herbert Phillips

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

By

Dr. Chester H. Gausman, President
Central Technical Community College Area
Grand Island, Nebraska

JC 790 171

Paper presented at National Conference on Small/Rural Colleges (1st, Blacksburg, Virginia, August, 1978)

CURRICULUM COMPREHENSIVENESS IN THE SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING MORE OUT OF LIMITED RESOURCES

As a member of the Small/Rural Community College Commission of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges since its inception, I believe that quoting excerpts from the position paper of that Commission is extremely appropriate for this presentation.

Under the title "Equal Opportunity and the Rural Community College" the following statement is included: "People living in rural areas are often denied higher education opportunities simply because they are not near a college or there are not enough people to justify expensive programs. Research has indicated that enrollments steadily decline as the distance from a campus increases. It has also been shown that a percentage of high school graduates living in the close vicinity of a community college, who go on to college, is higher than in areas where there is no community college."

The Commission holds that there should be equal educational opportunity for citizens living in less populated areas as there is for those living in the more populated areas of our nation. How to accomplish this is the key element of my remarks today.

There are many restraints that modify equality of opportunity. However, I will concern my remarks today to the following restraints:

1. Limited Resources
2. Effect of distance from a campus

3. Effects of the rural agriculturally related occupations

4. Sparsity of population

I will discuss one single technique that, in my opinion, has the greatest potential to overcome those restraints. This is no small task if your community has an area of 13,944 square miles and encompasses only 284,000 residents. This is the case of the Central Technical Community College Area in Nebraska, an area equal to approximately one-third the size of the State of Virginia, with only three major campuses to serve it.

I will discuss the advantages of individualized, self paced instruction and an open-entry-open-exit calendar as that technique. We began as early as 1966 to implement individualized instruction at our Hastings Campus. Since that time two additional campuses have been added, one of which was a Junior College with a traditional mode of operation. The opportunity was available to evaluate the effectiveness of Traditional vs Individualized Instruction within the same college area. The results of the study indicate quite clearly the advantages of Individualized instration in a rural setting.

We are moving rapidly to complete a transition of traditional instruction to individualized instruction on all campuses of the area and in the sixty four satellite centers where off-campus courses are available.

In what ways can individualized instruction provide greater equality of educational opportunity in a rural community? Perhaps the following statements will answer that question to your satisfaction.

A. Individualized Instruction increases enrollment on the campuses by coinciding the entry and exit from the college with the harvest seasons of the area. Students may enter or leave the college any day of the year and participate in self paced instruction. Students are not forced to give up an agricultural pursuit to participate in full-time education.

B. Individualized Instruction increases enrollment by permitting citizens who have become temporarily unemployed in the cities and towns of the area to coincide their enrollment at the college with the period of their unemployment.

C. Individualized Instruction increases enrollment in classes by providing more flexible scheduling to fit part-time employment as well as full-time employment.

Increases in enrollment were significant when two programs at the Platte Campus were individualized and the remainder of the programs at the campus remained in the traditional setting. Enrollment in the accounting program rose from an FTE of 28.56 in 1976-77 to 37-60 in 1977-78. Enrollment in the secretarial program rose from an FTE of 31.33 in 1976-77 to 47.56 in 1977-78. No additional instructors were needed in the changeover. There was no corresponding increase in enrollments of other program at that campus in the same time frame. Greater enrollment without a significant added cost certainly gets more out of limited resources.

D. Individualized Instruction reduces cost by getting greater productivity per instructor. The instructor is a moderator of the learning process, not the dispenser of knowledge. The computer based Mangement Information System of the Area indicated the following interesting cost comparisons between selected traditional courses at one campus and individualized courses on a second campus:

Data Processing	traditional:	$91.37	Unit cost per credit hour (less depreciation of equipment
	individualized:	63.63	
Mathematics	traditional:	41.07	
	individualized:	24.68	
Auto Technology	traditional:	59.94	
	individualized:	46.53	
Communications	traditional:	88.43	
	individualized:	42.61	

A $25.84 average cost benefit differential.

E. Individualized Instruction increases portability of courses to distant centers by permitting the use of part-time instructors. Instructors use programmed materials that require less preparation time and less professional educational experience to master the technique of instruction. Part-time instructors can efficiently and effectively instruct the courses as a moderator of the learning process and as a competency evaluator of the students' progress. Being able to use these part-time instructors reduces the necessity for campus staff to travel great distances to conduct courses. Staff at the campuses prepare the programmed materials, set criteria for selection of part-time

instructors and assist in monitoring the quality of the instruction at the remote sites.

This procedure is very effective for all courses where portability of equipment is not a major factor. However, use of public schools and industrial sites often provide the necessary equipment. Where this is not possible, equipment can be transported and placed in use for a period of time then moved to other locations as the need arises or the market for that course is saturated at that particular location.

F. Individualized Instruction provides a more effective means of packaging programs for industry on the campuses for short term instruction. The most common length of such courses is one week. These are not work shops or seminars but units of regular course. Industry sends employees during slack periods of regular enrollment and participate for one week in concentrated instruction for six to eight hours each day. Students often reside in residence halls on the campus. In one case, a large corporation, Kansas Nebraska Gas Company, sends a different class size contingent of students each week for the entire school year. The employees continue to receive pay and subsistence from the company during the week. A week away from the job for an employee does not severally restrict their regular operations nor does it infringe too greatly upon the private life of the employee. It provides a means to use campus facilities

and residence halls that might otherwise remain partially occupied. Maintaining full occupancy of residence halls and instructional facilities throughout the year is certainly a cost reducing factor of operation.

In closing may I say that I firmly believe that individualized self paced instruction and open-exit/open-entry student enrollment procedures can be significant factors in providing curriculum comprehensiveness, expanded services and reduced costs in the small or rural community colleges of the Nation both on campus and off campus.